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FOSS — SONG OF THE LIBRARY STAFF — 1906

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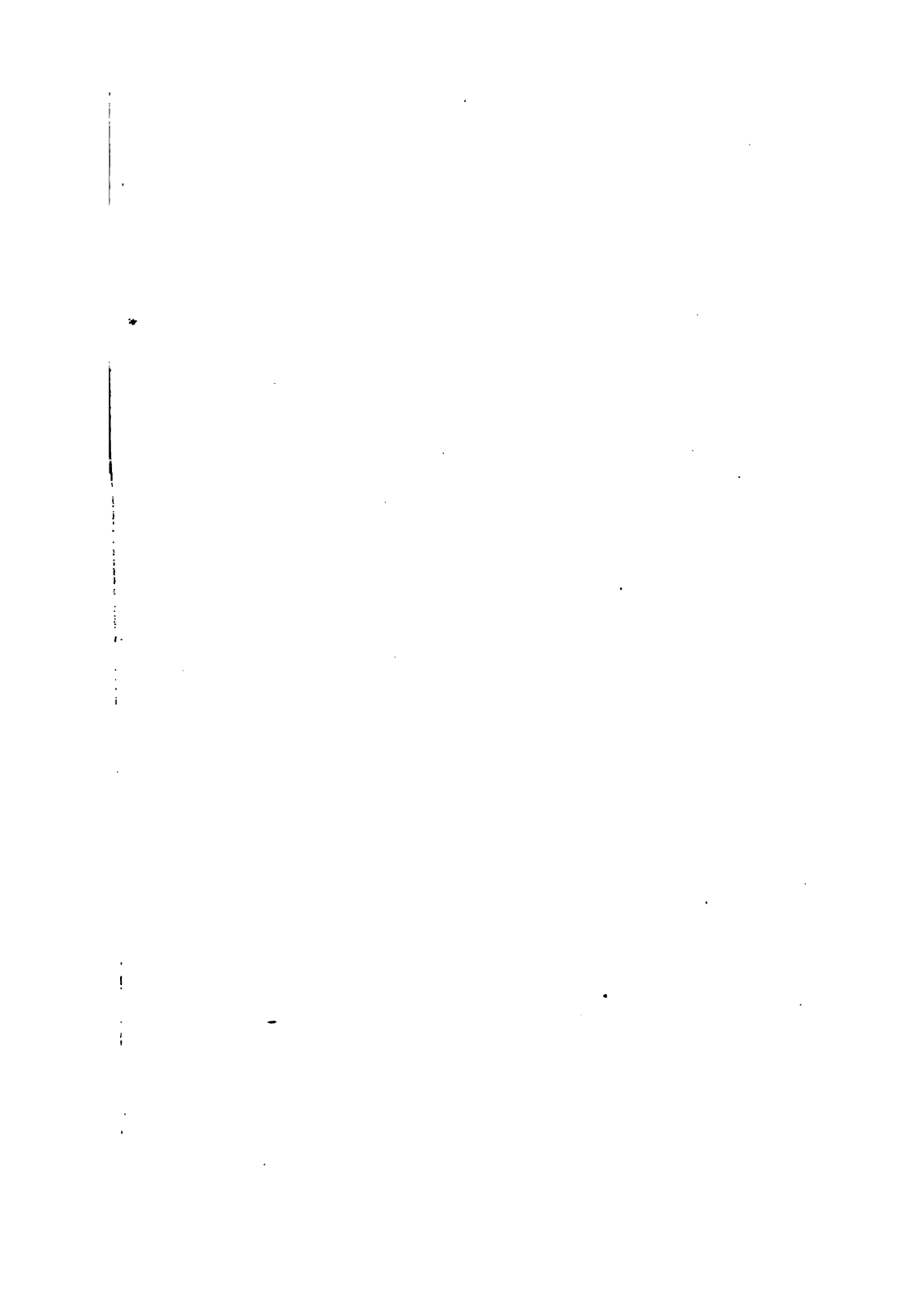
Library Science

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THE SONG
OF
THE LIBRARY STAFF

—BY—

SAM WALTER FOSS

LIBRARIAN

(Somerville, Mass.)



ILLUSTRATED BY
MERLE JOHNSON



JOHN R. ANDERSON

Books for Librarians

67 FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y.

1906

THE CATALOGUER

Oh, joy! to see the Library staff perpetually
jogging,
And to see the Cataloger in the act of cataloging.
("Catalogs — Log-books for cattle," was the
school-boy's definition,—
A statement not to be despised for insight and
precision)
Every language spoke at Babel in the books that
pile her table,
Every theme discussed since Adam — song or
story, fact or fable!
And she sweetly takes all knowledge for her
province, as did Bacon,
All the fruit that's dropped and mellowed since
the Knowledge tree was shaken,
All the ologies of the colleges, all the isms of the
schools,
All the unassorted knowledges she assort's by
Cutter's rules;
Or tags upon each author in large labels that are
gluey
Their place in Thought's great Pantheon in deci-
mals of Dewey;
Oh, joy! to see the Library staff perpetually jog-
ging,
And to see the Cataloger in the act of catalog-
ing.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

See the Reference Librarian and the joys that
appertain to her;
Who shall estimate the contents and the area of
the brain to her?
See the people seeking wisdom from the four
winds ever blown to her,
For they know there is no knowledge known to
mortals but is known to her;
See this flower of perfect knowledge, blooming
like a lush geranium,
All converging rays of wisdom focussed just be-
neath her cranium;
She is stuffed with erudition as you'd stuff a
leather cushion,
And her wisdom is her specialty—it's marketing
her mission.
How they throng *to* her, all empty, grovelling in
their insufficiency;
How they come *from* her, o'erflooded by the sea
of her omniscience!
And they know she knows she knows things,—
while she drips her learned theses
The percentage of illiteracy perceptibly de-
creases..
Ah, they know she knows she knows things, and
her look is education:
And to look at her is culture, and to know her
is salvation.



THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN

See the Children's gay Librarian! Oh, what
boisterous joys are hers
As she sits upon her whirl-stool, throned amid
her worshippers,
Guiding youngsters seeking wisdom through
Thought's misty morning light;
Separating Tom and Billy as they clinch in dead-
ly fight;
Giving lavatory treatment to the little hand that
smears
With the soil of crusted strata laid by imme-
morial years;
Teaching critical acumen to the youngsters
munching candy,
To whom books are all two classes — they are
either "bum" or "dandy";
Dealing out to Ruths and Susies, or to Toms
and Dicks and Harries,
Books on Indians or Elsie, great big bears, or
little fairies.
For the Children's gay Librarian passes out with
equal pains
Books on Indians or Elsie, satisfying hungering
brains;
Dealing Indians or Elsie, each according to his
need,
Satisfying long, long longings for an intellectual
feed.



THE DESK ATTENDANT

See the gleeful Desk Attendants ever dealing
while they can
The un-inspected canned beef of the intellect of
man ;
Dealing out the brains of sages and the poet's
heart divine
(Receiving for said poet's heart ofttimes a two-
cent fine) ;
Serene amid the tumult for new novels mani-
fold,—
For new novels out this afternoon but thirty
minutes old ;—
Calm and cool amid the tumult see the Desk At-
tendant stand
With contentment on her features and a date-
stamp in her hand.
As they feed beasts at the circus to appease their
hungering rage,
So she throws this man a poet and she drops that
man a sage,
And her wild beasts growl in fury when they do
not like her meat,—
When the sage is tough and fibrous and the bard
not over-sweet ;
And some retire in frenzy, lashing wrathfully
about,
When the intellectual spare-rib that they most
affect is out.
But she feeds 'em, and she leads 'em and be-
guiles 'em with sweet guile,
And wounds 'em with her two-cent fine and heals
'em with her smile.
Oh, the glesome Desk Attendant—who shall
estimate her glee?
Get some mightier bard to sing it—'tis a theme
too big for me!



THE HEAD LIBRARIAN

Now my Muse prepare for business. Plume your
wings for loftier flight
Through the circumambient ether to a super-
lunar height,
Then adown the empyrean from the heights
where thou hast risen
Sing, O Muse! the Head Librarian and the joy
that's her'n or his'n.
See him, see her, his or her head weighted with
the lore of time,
Trying to expend a dollar when he only has a
dime;
Tailoring appropriations—and how deftly he suc-
ceeds,
Fitting his poor thousand dollars to his million
dollar needs.
How the glad book agents cheer him—and he
cannot wish them fewer
With "their greatest work yet published since
the dawn of literature."
And he knows another agent, champing restive
to begin
With another work still greater will immediately
come in.
So perfection on perfection follows more and
more sublime
And the line keeps on forever down the avenues
of time—
So they travel on forever, stretching far beyond
our ken,
Lifting demijohns of wisdom to the thirsty lips
of men.



See him 'mid his myriad volumes listening to the
gladsome din
Of the loud vociferant public that no book is
ever "in";
And he hears the fierce taxpayer evermore lift
up the shout
That the book he needs forever is the book for-
ever "out."
How they rage, the numerous sinners, when he
tries to please the saints,
When he tries to please the sinners hear the nu-
merous saints' complaints;
And some want a Bowdlered Hemans and an ex-
purgated Watts;
Some are shocked beyond expression at the sight
of naked thoughts,
And he smooths their fur the right way, and he
placates him or her,
And those who come to snarl and scratch remain
behind to purr.
Oh, the gamesome glad Librarian gushing with
his gurgling glee!—
Here I hand my resignation,—'tis a theme too
big for me.

